

WOOD
THROUGH THE YEAR

1847
1847
1930





Through the Year

WITH

GERTRUDE WOOD



CCS

Box 239

Through the Year

:: WITH ::

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THROUGH THE YEAR

Through the year may kindness keep you
 In the comfort of her care;
 May you find the flower of friendship
 Blooming 'round you everywhere!

Through the year may courage calm you,
 Joy shine;—even through a tear;
 Love rest, like a benediction,
 On you every hour, my dear,—
 All through the year!

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Softly the New Year, all swathed in deep white,
 Opened her portals to me in the night;
 Swept me in with her, though trembling my tread,
 Granted me glimpses of pathways ahead.

Misty the vista my dim eyes could see;
 But, as I gazed, all the mists cleared to be
 Threads for the web I must weave on Life's loom,—
 Threads of all colours, for gladness and gloom.

Mine not the pattern, nor warp waiting there;
 Mine to choose threads, and to weave them with care.
 May I choose bright bits of beauty and cheer!
 May I weave wisely to bless the New Year!

SNOWFLAKES

How exquisite the star-shaped flakes of snow,—
 No two alike, yet perfect each design!
 Each feathery bit, minutely viewed, will show
 Delicate tracery so clear and fine.
 Alas for beauty when the wild winds blow,
 Crushing the stars in drifts pressed hard and deep!
 Their lost designs no one will ever know,
 Each individual smothered in the heap.

Is beauty of an individual life
 Destroyed thus in the seething city's crowd?
 Is Truth lost where temptations are so rife,
 Music drowned in cacaphony so loud?
 Are fine points broken in the rush and strife,
 Unreckoned, like these snowflakes from the cloud?

ANIMUS IN CORPORE

There's a mixture of the mystic
In this human heart of mine;
Much that is materialistic,
But a bit that is Divine.

Form of earth, whose needs are earthy,
Breath of God, through Adam lent,
Sometimes seeming so unworthy,
Then on wide wings, Heaven-sent!

Let me feel, O, Spirit glorious,
Some small gain in every day;
That my soul may, more victorious,
Keep in place its mould of clay!

APOSTROPHE TO POETS

Great poets breathe a richer, rarer air
On pinnacles of proud achievement; so
Know little of the narrow lanes below,
And folk who walk in lowly wisdom there.
But you, who feasts of finer phrasing share,
Where founts of inspiration freely flow,
High, where the far, pale stars new radiance show,
Illumining immortal heights to dare.

Think not that I, whose simple song is least,
Should, therefore, let my poor Muse atrophy;
For, when the echoes from the clouds have ceased,
Some untouched heart may need my melody:
I'll gather fragments falling from your feast,
And spice with these my humbler minstrelsy.

AURORA IS DANCING TONIGHT

Aurora is dancing to-night,
Rosy skirts billowing to and fro,
Lacy points lingering low, so low,
Swishing, then swinging among the stars
Tiny toes twinkling to wind guitars,
Rainbow rays fluttering, feathery light
Aurora is dancing to-night.

MAN AND INFINITY

It is not given to our finite mind
 To grasp Infinity;
For deepest thought but leaves more undefined
 A great Divinity.

To learn all that is wrapped in one small seed
 Would take Eternity;
We then must have a most elastic creed,
 Nor scorn modernity.

And why should any one mere man think he
 Is an authority,
Or force his views on others, though they be
 A small minority?
He who is always learning holds in fee
 Superiority.

The wisest are the humblest; they have glimpsed
 The great Divinity;
And see the Age of Man pale wisp of mist
 Across Infinity.

GOD MADE THE COYOTE

God made the coyote; don't forget
There's some good in the creature yet.
 A thief? A coward? Maybe so;
 But you can't wipe him out, you know
From off his prairie parapet.

He laughs at every trap you set,
Nor swiftest hound can cause him fret;
 Denned in the ground his families grow;—
 God made the coyote!

The prairie's ever in your debt,
Bold carrion-scavenger! Beset
 On every hand by thankless foe,
 Derided, scorned, —yet there you show
Your wierd and mocking silhouette!
 God made the coyote.

GRATITUDE

Quite interesting it is to note
How all the various creatures say
Their thanks for all the food and drink
Prepared and served them day by day!

The kitten purrs and rubs your shoe,
Dogs lick your hand, and jump in play,
Ev'n pigs look up and grunt when gorged
On all the food put in their way;

Cows chew their cud in such content,
You feel their peace is plenty pay;
But man? . . . lights up a cigarette,
Puts on his cap, and thanklessly,
Leaves you to clear the mess away.

VALENTINE

Frosty, lace-trimmed Valentine,
Etched upon my window-pane;
Diamond-dusted each design,
Frosty, lace-trimmed Valentine!
Soon the sun will blur each line;
Like Love's promise, bright but vain,—
Frosty, lace-trimmed Valentine,
Etched upon my window-pane!

WHY IS ART

Now, what, and why is Art, I ask,—
The painter's art I mean,
I visited an Art Museum,
And gazed on every scene;
Gazed long at so-called "modern art",
Beheld with studious frown,
For I would know the artist's mind,—
(Could it be upside down?)

It looked like bloom off apple-trees
Caught in a hurricane,
Pink and white blobs were all there were,
No guide, none to explain.
Sadder, not wiser I went home,
Nor have reviewed the scene.
Now, what and why is Art, I ask,—
The painter's art, I mean.

THE NEW CHURCH

Chaste and severe its lines,
With no redundancy of cornice, carving,
Or embellishment.
Smooth, straight and plain its rise,
With windows set
Like loop-holes in a castle wall,—
Needs but a moat, a warder and a gate
To make the modern church
A fortress fitting for Crusader date.

Give me,—give me the crannied wall
Of ancient stone, with ivy over-grown,
And a tall spire,—useful to some perhaps
But as a weather-vane, yet for us all,
Constant reminder we must lift our thoughts,
Our hearts,
Above earth's crushing and
Stagnating levels of monotony
To God:

He made His temples with tall trees
And flowering shrubbery,—
Orchids in precipices,
Gems in undulating ocean-beds,—
But never, never with conventional design,
Or smooth, cold, pale cement.

SPRING

Spring! The dirty days of March,
Mud and slush, and winter's debris,
As the sun lengthens his arch!

Spring! O, welcome April rain,
Wash the grime down through the gutters,
Leave the world spring-cleaned again!

Spring! May carpets all the place
With green grass, and from the willows
Hangs new curtains, pale, green lace.

Spring! Sap's running, tractors roar,
Flowers bloom, and birds are nesting,
As the world awakes once more.

LIFE IS LIKE MARCH

Life is like March, it seems to me,
With skies in dismal panoply,
Back-biting winds, sharp, stinging sleet,
With slippery paths for careless feet,
And storms of chill adversity.

Though bits of blue we sometimes see,
Dark clouds bear grim analogy
To battling thunder's distant beat;
Life is like March!

Yet, a challenging ecstasy
Pervades the air, provides the key
To love of life, for sap runs sweet,
Stray sunbeams fall on field and street,
And breathe, "The best is yet to be".
Life is like March.

ST. PATRICK'S CAKE

The prairie looks like a marble-cake,
That March has mixed for St. Patrick's sake.
With snowy swirls, and chocolate-drops
With icing sifted across their tops,
And lacy ruffles of palest green
Tucked tidily in around the scene.

THE BUFFER

March is a buffer
'Twixt winter and spring,
A doughty, bluff duffer,
And proud as a king.

He bids February
Withdraw his rude jeers,
And April be wary
Of wasting her tears.
He whistles defiance
To winter's wild roar,
While snowdrifts like giants
He smooths like the floor.

'Twixt far below zero
And spring's sudden rush,
March stands,—a hero,
Though slathered with slush.

THE IN - BETWEEN

March and November,—lonely months,
The "in-betweens" of the years,
With gusty sobs and grimy daubs
Of fitful, freezing tears;
With sudden squalls from scowling skies,
Horizons mussed by mist,
When migrant fowl honk high above
The mud-bogged motorist.

WHEN APRIL WALKS

When April walks, weeping, across the hill,
Her falling tears freeze as they softly spill
On rough, icy foot-prints of March, that still
Linger along the way.

When April walks, waving her silver wand
Where willows their funny fur hoods have donned,
The little frogs trill in the reedy pond
Riotous roundelay.

When April walks, smiling through tears like pearls,
The crocus her fuzzy, green stem uncurls,
And lightly the lavender bud unfurls,
Greeting the sun-kissed day.

When April walks homeward across the hills,
The gay dandelions all dance quadrilles,
While sleepy old Earth feels a million thrills,
For April is calling May.

MAUNDAY THURSDAY

He sent on two disciples
the Passover to prepare,
But I am sure it was not set
on wooden tables bare.
Someone had laundered linens
to be lovingly laid there;
Someone had made the room all clean,
polished the silverware,
And laid a fire to comfort them
from chilly, evening air!
Some woman worshipped thus that night;
they still do everywhere.

FAITH

As wee birds buffet the freezing gale,
They cheerfully chirp, though wild winds wail,
They know that though raging storms beset,
Their God has never forgotten yet.

RESURGIT

Oh! Lovely in spring was the apple-tree's bloom,
A bower of beauty and petalled perfume,—
The wind sent the petals flying.

A red apple hung in a green apple-tree,
The loveliest thing that Autumn would see,—
The wind blew it down for dying.

All faded, and wrinkled and shrivelled it lay,
A prey to the insects that feed on decay,—
The wind through the leaves went sighing.

But lo! There was life in the seed in the core,
And Beauty lived on, as it will evermore
Tho winds shall have ceased replying.

THE RAINBOW

Beautiful ribbon across the sky,
Magic that far, fairy fingers wove,
For painter's palette and artist's eye,—
Red, orange, yellow, green, blue and mauve,
And shades between,—yet all part of one
Clear, white light from the heart of the sun!

Beautiful bits of refracted light,
Split by a million raindrop prisms!
So is the Truth,—the Heavenly Light,—
Split by our 'ologies into 'isms;
Each with appeal to some human soul,
Each but a part of one Infinite Whole.

ON A BUSY DAY

When you are faced with need for haste,
With tiresome tasks up-piling,
Just tackle first what seems the worst,—
The next will come up smiling!

DARK NIGHT

(Apostrophe to Death)

The night is dark-thick dark; I feel it there.
A sighing breath moves lightly on my hair,
A soft-gloved hand that would caress my face
With touch of sinister, but velvet grace.
Black dark! Cut now by light like sudden star,
A friendly flash that beams out from afar
Only to dip behind a distant hill,
And leave the night's deep darkness deeper still.

O, Night of Death, whose sable wings outspread
Deepen the shadows gathering 'round my head,
As those whose friendship brightened my brief
day

Are gathered one by one and swept away,—
Know this, as those black, silent wings come on,
"The darkest hour is just before the Dawn".

FOR SHAKESPEARE'S ANNE

(On his birthday, April 21st)

On Shakespeare's tomb the world its wreaths may lay;
My tribute is to you, Anne Hathaway!

You braved convention's scorn to make a home;
For genius. Home! Yet, he was free to roam,
To follow all the flights of phantasy,
And leave the world its richest legacy;
A wandering star, and gathering new fire
Where fateful halls of fame the mind inspire,
Till, from the highest pinnacle of Art,—
Like homing bird,—your understanding heart
And ever-waiting hearth he sought again,
There, till his life-work ended, to remain.

Without the inspiration of your love,
Could he have left the world such treasure-trove?
On Shakespeare's tomb the world its wreaths may lay,
My tribute is to you, Anne Hathaway!

MODERN POETRY

Staccato beats,
and long, lugubrious lines,—
what music struggles through
in such tormented verse?
What beauty?
On what emotions can such hope to play,
save sorrow for the waste
of time and space?
(Unless it could be horror!
In such a world of horrors maybe such were
meet!)
Can poetry not rise to greater heights?
Point to some brighter skies,
and lead the way?

MY FAITH LOOKS UP

My faith looks up through the still night,
Beyond the twinkling orbs of light,
Through the illimitable space,
To seek the Heavenly Father's face,—
The secret of the Infinite.

From migrant bird's unfathomed flight
To buried gem, earth shows His might;
That hidden Power,—life's source,—to trace,
My faith looks up.

Ill winds of sin would bring a blight
To God's handwork; would disunite
Earth's elements,—even erase
His Name, His worship, and His grace;
But, through the clouds that blind the sight,
My faith looks up.

WHAT I MIND

Do you like doing floors?
Oh, I don't mind!
Doing dishes, and laundry, and housewifely chores?
No, I don't mind.
Each housekeeping item, when taken alone;
Well, I don't mind a touch of it;
But, what drives me frantic I freely will own,—
There's just too darn much of it!

MAYDAY

The meadow-larks are carolling,
And bluebirds flash on jewelled wing.

The lawn with gold is flower-flecked,
Arachne's sequined sign unfurls,
The dewy grass is diamond-decked,
And tall weeds toss their pendant pearls.

Jade drops the pussy-willows wear,
And silver drapes of mist unfold
To show where pools of water share
The turquoise sky ringed 'round with gold.

In emerald velvet, down the hills,
May walks, and smiles on every gem,
But gathers from beside the rills
Shy violets for her diadem.

Then all the world awakes to sing
The crowning of the Queen of Spring.

SNOW IN MAY

A little storm that lost its way
Came drifting down on us in May;
Its puffy flakes of purest white
Kissed all the flowers, then vanished quite,
As if to say, "Since we must die,
In these green grasses let us lie";
And all the prairie wept that day.
For the little storm that lost its way.

MOTHER'S DAY

"That wonderful mother of mine", they sing,
And praises all day on the radio ring;
A most embarrassing pedestal, dear,
But cheer up, it's only for one day a year!
Wear your halo to-day while you're "Mother" to Tom;
To-morrow you'll just be the same old "Hey, Mom!"

TO MY MOTHER

("Sarah" means Princess)

There's a princess in a tower
Far above the haunts of men,
Who has made of life a bower,
Blessing all within her ken,
Letters, like a benediction,
Flow to others from her pen;
Gifted fingers, when they finish
Gifts for us, begin again.

Voice, that might have reigned in choirs,
Lullabies crooned long ago;
Hands, that might have painted pictures,
Make, with threads, a garden glow,—
For the artist soul, frustrated,
Must express itself somehow,—
And there's breath of Highland heather,
Unseen halo, on her brow.

Poet soul, with hidden fire
Earthly sorrows could not smother;
Martyr spirit, self-effacing,
Thinking only of some other!
There's a crowning in the morning,
Far above the things that smother,
For the brave soul,—now a shut-in,—
Princess Sarah, my own Mother.

GRANDMOTHER'S PHOTOGRAPH

Dear, kind old face, brave, bright brown eyes,
With Highland memories mirrored there;
Dignified, poised, through pain made wise,
Dear, kind old face, brave, bright brown eyes!
Speak to me now from Paradise,—
The secret of that wisdom share,
Dear, kind old face, brave bright brown eyes
With Highland memories mirrored there!

MEMORY GARDEN

Is there method in the manner
You've arranged this garden-plot?
Yes. It is a sweet memorial,
Bordered with forget-me-not.
Here the lilac blooms in spring-time,—
She was born, you know, in May,—
And the violets, shyly smiling;
Drooped the day she went away.

Here are roses,—soft, pink petals
Like her tiny hands and cheek,
While the pansies' lifted faces
Of our darling seem to speak.
There is iris, like the laughing
Big blue eyes; I see them there;
And the golden-glow reminds me
Of her softly waving hair.

Baby breath and sweet alyssum
On her small mound blossom yet;
And for her, our little darling,—
Blooms this bed of mignonette.
There the lily-of-the-valley
Rings her requiem through the rain,
But the bleeding-hearts are ours,
For she will not come again.

LIFE IS A GIFT

Life is a gift,—unasked, unearned,
often unwanted, it is true;
The time, the place, the circumstance
not our responsibility;
And yet, we dare not toss it carelessly
away.

Then, when we may have learned somehow
to appreciate its worth,
And how to use it,—even love the gift,
Death comes, and snatches it away.

WAITING

"Oh! Hark! I hear the clip, clop, clip
of little Biddy's hoof,

Home-coming down the hill!"

No, mother, 'tis the wind that sets
loose shingles on the roof

Flip-flapping at its will.

"Oh! Hark! I hear the old, grey team
and wagon down the trail,

Home-coming from the town!"

No, mother, 'tis the wind that makes
the clothes-line creak and wail,

As it blows up and down.

"Oh! Hark! At last there is the car;
I hear the motor's beat,

Home-coming through the night!"

No, mother, 'tis the wind you hear.

Its cadences repeat

Now loud, and then more light.

So, often through the long, long years,
I've listened through the night

For loved ones coming home.

Some day, beyond these winds I'll wait,
and watch where there's no night,

Till they have all come Home.

I SAW A BUTTERFLY

I saw a butterfly

Silently flutter by,—

Gossamer glory on the wing;

I saw a beetle walk

Over a weedy stalk,—

Rainbows arrayed the lowly thing.

Beauty! Made not for man alone,—

God sees. He knows and loves His own.

LOVE

Old as winter, yet younger than spring,

Sweet as melody singing birds bring,

Bitter as pain;

Strong as oak, yet a delicate thing,

Crushable as a butterfly's wing

Out in the rain.

THE BRIDE

(A double rondeau)

She walks in radiant beauty down the aisle,
—The petal face as fair as her bouquet,
All starry-eyed to meet him with a smile,
And at the altar with him kneel to pray.

In heirloom lace and satin's soft array,
In misty veil, arranged with witching wile
—Epitome of loveliness in May,—
She walks in radiant beauty down the aisle.

Like lotus-buds upon the river Nile,
Roses and fern cascade to silken sway,
And orange-blossoms lean to frame the while
The petal face as fair as her bouquet.

For us the setting, but for her to-day
She may as well be on some desert isle,
She sees but him, and would run all the way,
All starry-eyed, to meet him with a smile.

For now all thoughts of ceremonial style
Have vanished; life is not a play!
To give hers to him,—to its last, long mile,
And at the altar with him kneel to pray,
She walks in radiant beauty.

TWILIGHT

Past the evening star, clear shining,
Twilight flits with footstep light,
Trailing violet velvet lining
For the dark blue robe of Night;
Gentle breath, half sigh, half blessing,
Floating thru the darkening air,
As the lilac's light caressing
Sprinkles perfume on her hair.

Smoothed out by her fairy fingers,
Day's sharp outlines disappear,
While the lavender light lingers,
Whispering that Night is near.
Cares and toils of day are over,
Nature folds her work away,
Then, as night-wings o'er her hover,
Gentle twilight kneels to pray.

THE MAN AND THE MOON

The man and the moon are a lot alike,
Since both quite often get full;
Then, to his last quarter each is reduced,
And life becomes very dull.
So, each just sets out to get full again,
Nor seeks to improve one bit.
However, the moon has the edge on the man,
—It's beautiful when it's lit!

PRAIRIE NIGHT

I love the quiet, scented dark
Of prairie summer nights,
With only tiny, twinkling stars
Far in the blue, for lights.
Then softened sounds through shadows grey
Have an appealing charm,—
The lonely watch-dog's warning bay
Echoing from the farm,
While coyotes, wary of the dogs.
Mute their staccato cries,
And in the sloughs the fat, green frogs
Croon sleepy lullabies.
The wee birds nesting twitter to
A little wind that grieves;
I hear its gentle sighing through
The fluttering poplar leaves,
And by the garden, where the flowers
Their faint perfumes release
To soothe the grief of lonely hours,
And bring a breath of peace.
Night deepens; wraps us in her warm
Soft darkness, still and deep.
Lulled by her silent, scented charm,
The weary ones may sleep.

TO "GYPSY"

O cat, with the complacent air,
The jungle lingers in your eyes;
You look so peaceful, purring there,
O, cat with the complacent air,—
But not one altruistic hair!
Inscrutable, and cruelly wise,
O, cat, with the complacent air,
The jungle lingers in your eyes!

MY HOME TOWN

My home town is a little town,
But filled with friendly folk,
Ready to do a kindly deed,
And make,—or take a joke.

Of many nationalities,
Our language is the same,
The "accent" is on friendliness,
Not how we spell each name.

Tho' schooled in varying faiths, we find
None is so very odd;
We all believe in brotherhood,
We all believe in God.

We all have work that we must do,
To earn our daily bread,
For no one is a millionaire,
And none is underfed.

My home town is a prairie town,
Far from the city street;
We each feel independant, but
We speak with all we meet.

When day is done, and twilight comes,
And youngsters cease to roam,
Then lights are lit, the doors are shut,
And my home town is "Home".

TIME AND LIFE

Time is the framework on which Life is built,
The lattice where Life's ivy twines and grows;
Time sets the pattern for Life's patchwork quilt,
And lays out for Life's garden decent rows.
Time is the key-board where Life's notes are played,
The cords thru which it breathes when Nature sings.
It is perspective, and the outlines laid
Whereon Life's artistry its beauty flings.

Wild weeds meander thru some gardens still,
And painter's pigments fall in senseless daubs,
Discords sometimes disturb fine music's thrill,
Yet all creation moves in steady throbs;
The stars in timeless timing swing, sublime,
And Life is at its best attuned to Time.

OVER THE SANDS

Merrily, merrily sang the sea,
And the home-bound ship flew fast and free,
While little waves rippled in kindly glee,
Over the sands to me.

Angrily, angrily roared the sea,
And the ship was labouring painfully,
For tempests were tossing it tirelessly,
Far, far from the sands and me.

Bitterly, bitterly booms the sea,
For the ship went down in the grey-green sea,
And the long waves roll in mournfully,
Over the sands to me.

TO THE CLOCK ON THE WALL

Hush, man-made martinet,
Your tiresome tick!
Sun-time's enough,—sunrise, sunset,—
Without your prick.

A half-hour here or there, forsooth,
May not be waste;
Living is Beauty, Love and Truth,
Not ticked-off haste.

TIRED

Tired? O, no. Not when life is so brief,
So full of so much, any change is relief.
My feet may play out, and my back feel an ache.
But the real me stays very much wideawake.
Old muscles get weary as time takes its toll
From this house of clay,—made for growing a soul,—
But time goes so fast, and there's so much to do,
So much to be tried, and each day something new,
And life is so brief,—yet so rich and inspired,
That the real, living me has no time to be tired!

DAD'S GONE

A little wind plays 'round the eaves,
Rustles the fallen poplar leaves,
Then, by the window, sighs and grieves,
"Dad's-not there!"

The sun still shines on the tree-ringed hill,
It scans the lake and the little rill,
Peeps in that window,—but all is still,
"Dad's not there!"

The bright cock-pheasant need not run,
Wild duck fly low in the Autumn sun,
No need to fear that well-aimed gun,—
"Dad's not there!"

The fish play, careless, in the lake,
No fishwormed hook is there to take,
No boat tied now to the rotted stake,—
"Dad's not there!"

But his flowers 'round the cabin grow,
And his evergreens at night, I know,
Will sometimes whisper, soft and low,
"Dad's here!"

LOOK FOR THE GOOD

Look for the faults, and you'll find them,
There are many along the way,—
But why make such a collection
To carry around all day?

Look for the good, and you'll find it,
No one is quite all wrong,
And treasuring this collection
Makes life a bit of a song.

Each has his own griefs and blunders
To bear, and to overcome,
Looking for goodness in others
Is sure to help all of us some.

RAINBOWS AND SUNSET

God made the sunset
Out of light,
And particles of dust;
The rainbow out of
Broken bits of light
And water-drops.

And God made man,—
Mostly of dust and water, too;
Light is provided, free. So we
May make of life and death
Rainbows and sunset:

SUNSET

A golden gleam of glory glows along
The western sky,—
A bit of beauty, lingering like a song
When night is nigh.

Far up the cloudy ladder of the sky,
In filmy draperies,—
Rose, mauve and gold,—ethereal visions fly,
Till daylight dies.

So misty memories of those we loved
Linger awhile,
A rosy radiance to float above
Life's last, long mile.

NIGHT

Deep purple passion-flower, full-blown,
Star-studded,
and wind-fringed,—
The canopy of Night!

Aurora's rainbow-tinted strings,
Wind-drums, and
singing stars,—
The melody of Night!

A shrouded earth, a misty moon,
Far depths
beyond the stars,—
The mystery of Night!

TEMPUS FUGIT

Sometimes it slowly flaps,
 Ugly black wings;
Then, sometimes sails right by,
 And gaily sings;
But often slips so silent
 Through the air,
We hardly notice there is
 Motion there,
Till snows sift down through what
 Were summer skies,
And we exclaim, astonished,
 "Hôw time flies!"

SONNET TO THE SEVENTIES

The Seventies! Life come to its November,
As time and sorrows show their furrowed trace
Across the faded fairness of the face
Turning serenely now to meet December.
Their joys, but not the toil, they now remember,
—Tied in blue ribbon, framed in silver lace!
Living has wrought within them richer grace,
Beauty that glows, to warm life's failing ember.

Ah! Now they may appreciate in full
The fruitage of their year; have time for ease
In mellow Indian Summer's lingering lull.
Life's variations have supplied the keys
For that close harmony sly Time cannot annul,
Nor mar the magic music of the Seventies.

FOREVER

The glorious sunset fades away,—
 Forever gone.
Another glows to-morrow, so
 The world moves on.
These lovely roses live their day;
 Another year
Others will bloom,—but these lie low,
 Crumpled and sere.

But,—these my memory cherishes
 Forever! Nay,
Alas! Thy memory perishes
 With thy cold clay.

THE PRAIRIE HOLDS MY HEART

The prairie holds my heart one with its beat
From the first greening of the winsome spring
Until the glory of the harvesting,
When sun and cloud chase over waving wheat.
Then hill and sky in snowy oneness meet
As winter storms have their fast, furious fling,
Frosty air crackles, and the taut wires sing,
And leisure, fire and friendliness are sweet.

There is a stimulus in city ways,
In mountain air, or salt breath from the seas;
And Memory may make the eyelids smart
Reviewing far-off scenes of other days,—
Blue water, crimson maples, . . . yet for me
These are now dreams. The prairie holds my heart.

TO "THE CANADIAN POETRY MAGAZINE"

These jagged, broken lines are not
The poetry folk love to hear;
Rhythm rules all the Creator's thought,
Rhyme is the right of human ear.
Such dismal dirge in unhewn verse
May be an aftermath of wars;
Poets should rise above such curse,
And turn the sword-points into stars.

To light the mind, to touch the heart,
Beauty and Music enshrine Truth;
A dictionary is not art,
And splintered prose is most uncouth.
One wearies of a wilderness
However fair the cactus' bloom,
And sighs for gardens' gladness,
With lilting laughter thru life's gloom.

Let new technicians find new name
To designate their artistry;
These crudities do but defame
The name "Canadian Poetry".



MOTHER'S FIND

Our old Fourth Reader, dear to memory!
Wish I had time to read its poetry!

“A cloud lay cradled near the setting sun, . . .”
“I’ll read a minute now the dinner’s on.”
“For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey . . .”
“Did I forget salt in that stew to-day?”
“When the Commodore Jacques Cartier to . . .”
“That pepper is too strong! Oh, dear! A-t-choo!”
“ . . . honeyed cells, These the tents which he frequents . . .”
“There goes that calf again, right through the fence, I’ll have to chase it. But, I won’t say when!”
“Their smile was gone from upland, glade and glen.”
“ . . . what, warder? Ho! Let the portcullis fall!”
“Here, baby, see your pretty, little doll.”
“Near yonder copse where once the garden smiled” . . .
“I know the weeds in mine are growing wild.”
“These are the gardens of the desert; these . . .”
“No, Rover, stay outside for you have fleas!”
“We see but dimly thru the mists and vapours . . .”
“The colts are up for water. See their capers!”
“And with my hand at midnight held your head . . .”
“I’d better slip upstairs and make that bed.”
“He laughed a laugh of merry scorn; he turned . . .”
“What do I smell? Gee whiz! The beans are burned!”
“ . . . a little child with face against the pane . . .”
“Here, baby, let me wipe your nose again.”
“ . . . let us away. Down and away below . . .”
“Is that the clock? Where do the hours go?”
“There was a sound of revelry by night . . .”
“I really must get dressed; I am a sight.”
“ . . . Dunedin, Ye may look in vain for them . . .”
“Oh, dear! I clean forgot to stitch that hem!”
“Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom . . .”
“I’ll flip the duster once around the room.”
“He who serves well, and speaks not, merits more . . .”
“The outfit’s coming! Hear that tractor roar!”
“The lowing herd winds slowly o’er the lea . . .”
“Maybe I better go and set the tea.”
“A perfect woman, nobly planned, To warn . . .”
“My Heavens! The men are coming from the barn!”

How thrilling to think back, and once more look
Through all the pages of our old Fourth Book!

THE SEASONS

The violet, and then the rose,
The aster, then the holly;
Each season comes in turn, then goes,—
Bud, flower, fruit, and then repose;
Hope, joy and melancholy,
Then peace, with moonlight on the snows.

NATURE'S KNITTING

Nature is knitting a year for me,
Knitting and purling in quiet glee,
Threading a song through her artistry,
(Ended with edgings of purest white,
Bordered with blue from the purple night,
Spangled with stitches of twinkling light;)

Purling a pattern of green and gold,
Lavender lilacs, and red buds rolled,
Bluebirds and larks, and a robin bold;
Knitting a summer of waving wheat,
Gardens and greenery, shimmering heat,
Sails on a blue lake, and roses sweet.
Knitting and purling her crimson leaves,
Lavender asters and golden sheaves,
Scudding, grey clouds, and a wind that grieves.
Nature is knitting a year for me,—
Knitting and purling, then giving it free,
Tasselled with bells from a Christmas Tree.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Softly, silently the snow
Settles on the town,—
Flitting, floating, fairy flakes,
Puffy bits of down.

Vainly would the silver moon
Slip the cumbering cloud,
Vainly would the winter winds
Whistle once a-loud.

Thickly powdered every roof,
Every post and eave,
Hushed, and breathless, peaceful, pure,
This is Christmas Eve!

DECEMBER 25th

A Tree a-light, a frosty night,
And tingling, jingling bells;
A candle's beam, a Star a-gleam,
Kriss Kringle's magic spells;
Wings in the sky, a Baby's cry,
Hope for the hearts a-drift;
A carol clear, and home-folk near,—
December twenty-fifth!

THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

"Is Santa Claus coming to-night, Mama?
I've hung up my stocking there;
I wrote him a letter last week, you know,
And now I shall say my prayer."
Will Santa Claus come to the prairie shack,
Where money is scarce for bread?
Must worn, little stockings hang limp until
The faith of a child lies dead?

The true Christmas Spirit needs not a purse,
It dwells in a heart of love;
Receiver and giver alike must know
It comes from the God above.
That stocking was bumpy on Christmas morn,—
Homemade candy, a popcorn ball,
And—these the only 'hard cash' outlay,—
Some crayons and scissors small.

With books of brown paper, all stitched and cut,
Adorned with a saucy elf,
And his crayons and scissors and magazines,
He'll make picture-books himself.
A checker-board made from a fruit-box end,
With broom-handle rounds for 'men',
An apple-box cart with whittled wheels
And rope-harness for old "Ben";

A marvellous puppy with floppy ears,
The kind that you take to bed,
The rag-bag provided its fat insides,
Its tongue was embroidered red,
So, Christmas was merry, and when at last
The bright head began to nod,—
"Well, Santa Claus didn't forget me, Mom,
I'm going to say 'Thank you' to God."

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